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Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 /062 W
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R 021037Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4663
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0346

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PINR, PINT, SO
SUBJ: DEPUTY MINISTERS OF DEFENSE DESIGNATED

1. FEBRUARY 26 SOMALI NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY (SONNA) BULLETIN ANNOUNCES DECISION TAKEN FEBRUARY 13 BY POLITBURO OF SOMALI REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST PARTY (SRSP) TO APPOINT FOUR BRIGADIER GENERALS AS DEPUTY MINISTERS OF DEFENSE. SIMULTANEOUSLY, POSTS OF COMMANDANT AND FIRST AND SECOND VICE COMMANDANT OF ARMED FORCES WERE ABOLISHED. SPEAKING AT SWEARING-IN CEREMONY, PRESIDENT MOHAMED SIAD BARRE SAID THAT DEFENSE MINISTRY HAD BEEN RESTRUCTERED FOLLOWING "REASSESSMENT" OF MINISTRY'S RESPONSIBILITIEIS
,
DUTIES AND ORGANIZATION. NO DETAILS ON NEW STRUCTURE WERE GIVEN.

2. FOUR NEW DEPUTY MINISTERS ARE: MOHAMOUD GHELLE YUSUF (FORMERLY PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL SECURITY COURT AND SECOND VICE COMMANDANT OF ARMED FORCES); OMAR HAJI MOHAMED (FORMER COMMANDER OF GROUND FORCES); MOHAMED NUR GALAAL (SEE COMMENT, BELOW); AND ABOKOR HASSAN WEHELIYE (FORMER DEPUTY TO OMAR HAJI MOHAMED). ALL ARE MEMBERS OF SRSP CENTRAL COMMITTEE. NAME OXAARMED FORCES HAS ALSO BEEN CHANGED TO SOMALI NATIONAL ARMBW FORCESV
VICE SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY.
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3. COMMENTAC WE PLAN TO TAP OUR FRIENDS IN THE ATTACHE CORPS TO GET THEIR READINGS ON THIS DEVELOPMENT. IT IS NOT, FOR EXAMPLE, CLEAR AT THIS POINT WHETHER THE FOUR OFFICERS HAVE GAINED OR LOST INFLUENCE. DESPITE THEIR FANCIER TITLES, AS DEPUTY MINISTERS THEY WILL PROBABLY NO LONGER HAVE TROOPS UNDER THEIR DIRECT COMMAND. MOHAMED NUR GALAAL IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN THE MILITARY

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COMMANDER OF THE WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION FRONT, THE ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE RECOVERY OF SOMALI-INHABITED LANDS IN THE OGADEN. WHAT EFFECT, IF ANY, HIS TRANSFER WILL HAVE ON THAT ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES IS NOT KNOWN. FIRST VICE PRESIDENT MOHAMED ALI SAMANTAR, WHO WAS PRESENT AT THE SWEARING-IN, SAW HIS POST OF COMMANDANT OF ARMED FORCES ABOLISHED BUT THE MEANING OF THIS DEVELOPMENT FOR SAMANTAR'S POLITICAL FUTURE IS NOT YET APPARENT. IT DOES, HOWEVER, RAISE THE INTERESTING POSSIBILITY THAT SIAD, BY REMOVING SAMANTAR FROM THE DIRECT CHAIN OF MILITARY COMMAND, IS ATTEMPTING TO DMINISH THE CHANCES OF POTENTIAL GRAB FOR POWER BY SAMANTAR. IT IS PROBABLY NOT ACCIDENTAL THAT TWO (AND PERHAPS THREE) OF THE FOUR NEW DEPUTY MINISTERS ARE MEMBERS OF PRESIDENT SIAD'S MAREHAN CLAN.
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